

Hollis Social Library History

The Hollis Social Library was incorporated by the General Court of the State of New Hampshire in the year 1799. The library began its life as an association. It was open to members for an initial fee of \$2.00 and annual dues of 50 cents; it consisted of a collection of 300 books. For years, the library was moved from place to place and did not have a permanent home. Finally in 1851, the collection was installed in a room of the Congregational Meeting House. In 1879, the library was sold to the Town of Hollis for \$1.00, becoming one of the first public libraries in New Hampshire. The collection remained housed in the Congregational Meeting House for an additional thirty years, requiring more and more space as the number of books increased.

In the first decade of the 20th century, a committee headed by Franklin Worcester raised \$13,500 for a new building. Land in the center of Hollis, owed by Mr. Worcester, was given and deeded to the town for “the purpose of locating and sustaining a Public Library.” On August 24, 1910 the Greek-Revival building, designed by the Boston firm of Magee & Rowe, opened. In an address by Thomas Proctor, it was dedicated to “the rational enjoyment, to the broader education and to the greater happiness of the people” of Hollis, that it may “teach anew and more fervently the lesson of patriotism, good citizenship and in the age of unrest and change, respect for law.”

Library benefactor, Franklin Worcester, became the first Chairman of the Library Trustees and Clara Smith was the first librarian in the new building. She was followed, in 1917, by Louise Stratton who remained in that position until 1944. Succeeding librarians were Ruth Rogers in 1944 and Lillian Hill Morrison who stayed until 1967. Frances “Polly” Hayden was librarian from 1967 until 1985. Janet Sherwood was Library Director from 1986 until 1995, followed by Steve Russo from 2000 until 2007. In January of 2008, Gaye Kulvete became the Library Director staying until 2011. Lucinda Mazza served as Library Director from 2011 through 2015. The current Library Director of the Hollis Social Library is Laura Klain.

Over the years, the number of volumes in the library increased from 4,000 to almost 20,000, and the annual circulation changed from 2,400 to almost 34,000 materials borrowed yearly. The original building of 1,500 square feet became too small for the growing collection. In 1991, following earlier unsuccessful attempts to obtain approval for expansion, plans began for an addition to the library. A new building committee chartered by the Board of Library Trustees chose the architectural firm of Galliher and Baier of Simsbury, Connecticut to design a 4,000 square foot addition. The project broke ground in December, 1992 and the new addition to the library was dedicated on September 12, 1993.

Today, the Hollis Social Library is proud to recognize its beautiful building which has stood on Monument Square for over 100 years. The library provides over 47,000 items to the residents of Hollis. Each year, the library offers its patrons a variety of educational, informational and entertaining programs. In addition, the library is a great community destination. It offers free Wi-Fi and public computers as well as a place to read, research, meet-up with friends and just relax.